



ROYAL DE LUXE NANTES

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The legend of the icebergs

Dear great friends of Limerick and Ireland
In order to shed light on your country's history,
I must delve into some explanations

that will, I have no doubt, raise the hair on the back of the necks of the bravest
amongst you.
and send you rushing to all the pubs of the city
to comfort yourselves with large pints of Guinness!

Several thousand years ago,
the country was in perpetual battle.
Giants who lived on huge floating icebergs
fed on snow and whales.

They were governed by the terrible Tadgal MacToole,
who had been born into a long line of the greatest sovereigns of the Ice Age
and had made the decision to completely surround the Irish coasts,
replacing the sea with ice mountains that were harder than steel.

These giants were fabulous fighters,
and had planned to move the island to the North Pole,
to imprison it in the centre of this prodigious freezer,
in order to crush it like the hull of a ship
that had become as fragile as an egg in a gorilla's hand.

The Gaelic watchmen of the time spotted white mountains approaching
as far as the eye could see.

At first dazzled by the light reflected by the sun,
one of them collapsed to the ground, suddenly blind.
He got back up and started to run around in every direction,
screaming for everyone to divert their eyes.
Then, he fell off a cliff and disappeared.

Thousands of messengers galloped away,
as they spread the word throughout the villages.

Sualgen O'Sionnach, king of the Gaels,
was staying at that time in the county of Munster, near Limerick.

Having been informed, he assembled all of the oracles.
He spoke to the gods: a plan was put in place.

When the ice mountains touched the Irish coasts,
a terrible jolt shook the whole Island.

Houses collapsed onto their inhabitants,
whole sections of mountain disappeared into the dust,
huge rocks were launched into the sky.
The Island shook from the impact.

A delegation of three oracles was assembled.
In order to avoid sudden blinding,
they covered their eyes.

Next, they boarded a small boat and sailed down the Shannon.
When their boat reached the ice mountain,
they asked to see Tadgal MacToole.

When he appeared, the oracles said to him:
"Great captain of the ice giants,
do you agree to fight our king in the shadow of the small stone hill
we have made in your honour, he will be alone...?"

Tagdal MacToole brandished his sword towards the sky and replied :
"In the name of the ice gods, I'm your man!"
From his sword sprang a thunderbolt so powerful that it pierced the clouds.

Once behind the hill of stone the giant found himself facing Sualgen.

"You are strong, ice warrior,
but know that I am the greatest runner in this land.
I am nimbler than a monkey, faster than a cheetah and more cunning than a fox,
creatures you have never encountered."

Having said this, he sprinted between the giant's legs and threw a rock at him.
Tagdal turned and thrust his sword around in every direction.
Every time the king ducked, dodged and bounced around,
annoying his adversary who had unleashed so much thunder from his sword that it
started to rain.

Finally, the king, Sualgen O'Sionnach, stood completely still with his back to the hill.

The giant approached and unceremoniously cut his body in two with one stroke. However, strangely, the two pieces parted, hopped onto a foot each, reattached themselves and became one man again.

Meanwhile, the sword had buried itself so deep into the ground that MacToole, the giant, was unable to get it out.

A calm spring emerged from it followed by a huge geyser of brown water. The giant collapses, dead and vanquished! At the same time, the icebergs detach themselves and melt into the sea.

The brown water starts to form a new river which joins up with the Shannon. One of the Gaels, having tasted the water from the new river, exclaims "But it's Guinness! A river of Guinness!"

Through the thunder the voice of the gods can be heard:
"And so, great king of the Gaels,
you have vanquished the ice, but in return you must live for eternity
in a bath of Guinness!"

(A suspended bath appears with a man in it. It is filled up with bottles of Guinness, placed down and then it starts up...)

© Jean-Luc Courcoult, author / director of the street theatre company Royal de Luxe